KING'S GAME
ORIGIN
WE RETURN TO 1977 AND THE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE OF YONAKI, PURPOSEFULLY ISOLATED FROM THE WORLD AT LARGE BY ITS INHABITANTS. THE KING'S TRUE FORM IS NOW BELIEVED TO BE A VIRUS WITH A SINGLE, UNIFIED CONSCIOUSNESS THAT KILLS ITS VICTIMS BY OVERWHELMING THEM WITH PRIMAL, ABJECT TERROR. NOW THE GOVERNMENT HAS ORDERED THE VILLAGE QUARANTINED TO PREVENT THE VIRUS FROM SPREADING, AND THE POLICE AND DOCTORS HAVE BEEN CALLED HOME!
KATONNNG
SHMMM
THUD

THE ENTRANCE TO THE VILLAGE IS TOTALLY LOCKED DOWN...
CLANG
ガシャン

CHAPTER 21

KING'S GAME ORIGIN

STORY BY NOBUAKI KANAZAWA ART BY J-TA YAMADA

LIKE I EVEN HAVE THE ENERGY TO TRY...
RUNNING WOULD BE POINTLESS ANYWAY, RIGHT?
IF MIYAZAWA-SAN'S THEORY IS CORRECT...
...THEN THERE'S SOME NEW TYPE OF VIRUS IN ALL OF OUR BODIES THAT FUNCTIONS!...
YEAH... TRUE.

WITHOUT ANY WAY FOR ME TO RESIST?
...TO "DIE" ...
...THEN WHAT?
WOULD MY CELLS REACT TO THE ORDER...
...WITH ENOUGH FORCE TO DISMEMBER ME?
TO DRAIN ALL MY BLOOD? SMASH MY BONES TO BITS?!
JUST THINKING ABOUT THIS UNKNOWN DISEASE...
...RUNNING THOUGH MY VEINS...
IT JUST MAKES YOU FEEL... POWER-LESS
IF THE VIRUS ORDERED MY BRAIN...
...AS THE TRIGGER FOR THE KING'S GAME.

HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW?
RYUUJI
YOU THINK THE KING'S GAME IS REALLY A VIRUS?
GUZU
EVEN THAT SCIENTIST GUY ISN'T SURE.
THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES IT.
BUT...
SO, KAZUNARI...
YEAH...
FOR THEM IT'S THE BEST COURSE—
THAT'S WHY THEY ORDERED ALL OF THEM OUT.

DO YOU STILL TRUST THEM?
HUH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU HEARD THAT SKINNY SCIENTIST GUY.
KILLING THE INFECTED IS THE EASIEST WAY TO GO.
WHAT THE GOVERNMENT'S DOING NOW...

KEEPING US LOCKED UP IN HERE...
...IS THE SAME AS WAITING FOR THE KING'S GAME TO KILL US ALL.

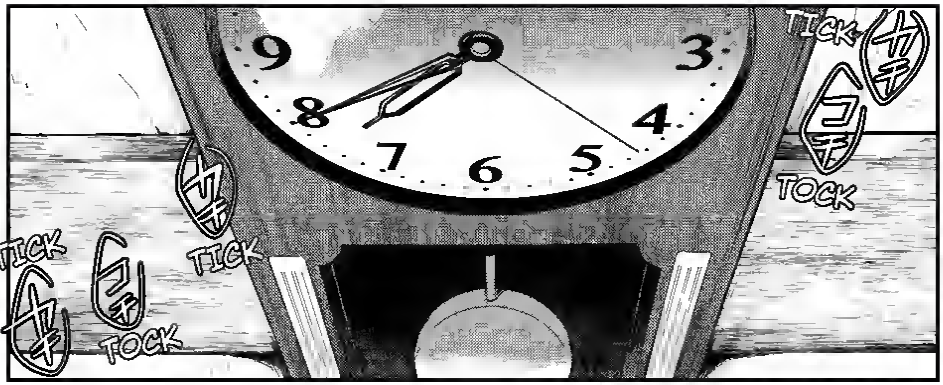
THERE'S NO WAY THE GOVERNMENT IS ACTUALLY TRYING TO SAVE US NOW.
THAT'S ... THAT'S ...
IT'S TRUE, RIGHT?

I MEAN, DOUJIMA-SAN SAID THEY'D BRING US FOOD AND SUPPLIES EVERY DAY, RIGHT?
OF COURSE THEY WILL— WE'VE GOT FAMILY LIVING OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE.
THEY'VE GOTTA MAKE IT LOOK GOOD.
I... I DON'T THINK THAT'S TRUE.
FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S POINT OF VIEW, IT'D BE VERY CONVENIENT IF WE ALL DIED.
BUT...
EVEN BEFORE NOW, THERE HAVE BEEN ORDERS WHERE THE ENTIRE VILLAGE COULD'VE BEEN WIPED OUT, RIGHT?
IF WE ALL DIE FROM THE KING'S GAME...
...THE VIRUS DIES WITH US.

IF WE... ALL DIE...

GRIT
MAYBE RYUUJI'S RIGHT.
IF THE VIRUS KILLS US ALL...
...THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T NEED TO BOTHER WITH A COUNTER-STRATEGY.
THE HEADLINE JUST BECOMES, "MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS WIPES OUT SMALL, REMOTE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE."
IF THERE'S EVEN THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE THAT BY SURVIVING WE COULD SPREAD THE VIRUS...
...CAN I EVEN BLAME THE GOVERNMENT FOR WANTING US ALL DEAD?
RUSTLE

SWOOSH
THE SEVENTH ORDER...
THERE'S STILL ONE TO GO.

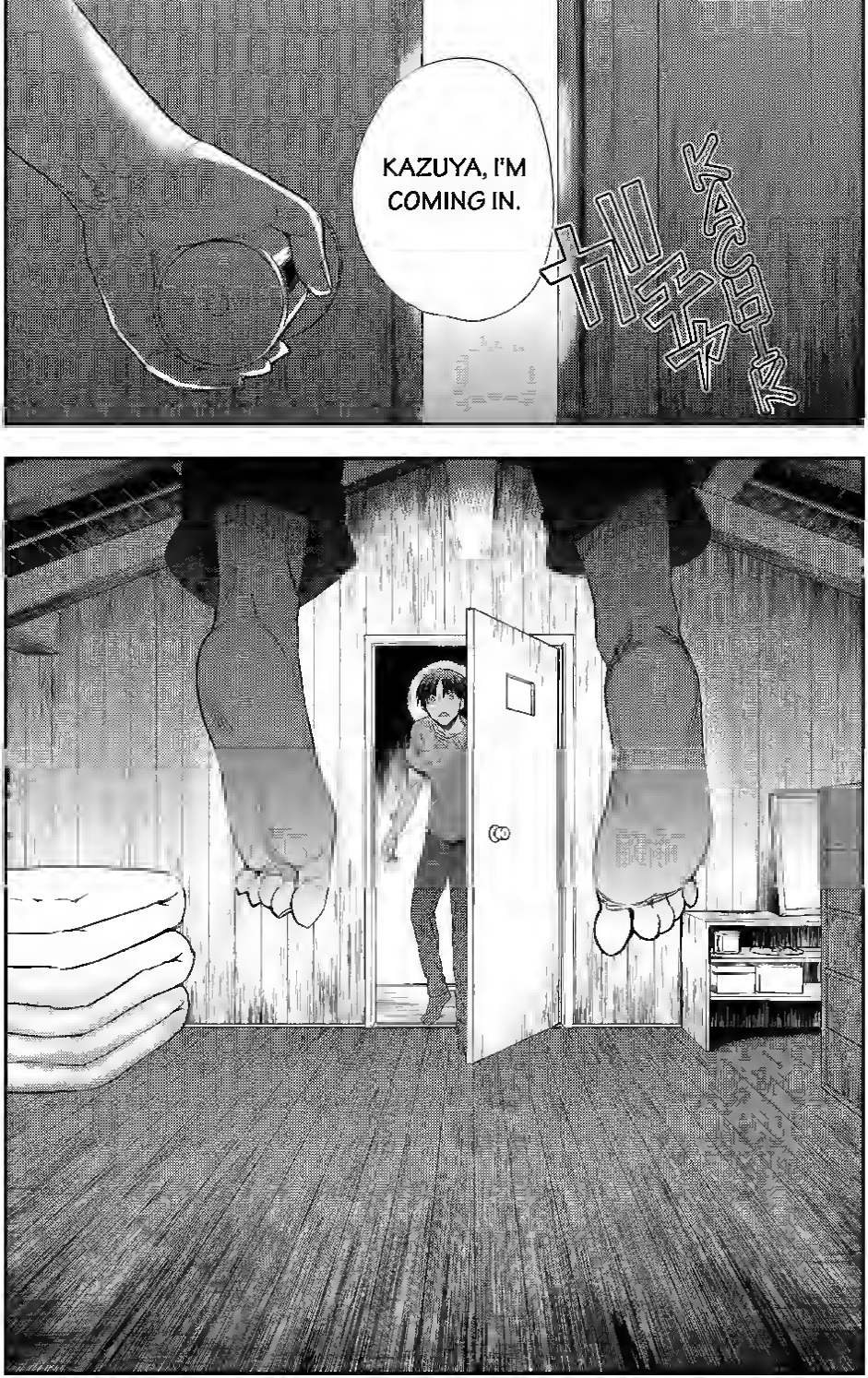

TICK
TOCK
TICK
TOCK
TICK
TOCK

IN A LITTLE MORE THAN FOUR HOURS SOMEONE ELSE WILL DIE

PUFF
PUFF
PFOOOOO
MICHIKO
...?
...?
WHERE'D SHE GO?

THE COPS AND DOCS ARE ALL GONE NOW, SO...
MICHI-KO?
SHE'S UP ON THE SECOND FLOOR, CHECKING ON KAZUYA.
ATSU-SHI-SAN.
EH?
WHERE DID MICHIKO GO?
OF COURSE IT IS!
KAZUYA'S JUST A GRADE-SCHOOLER.
HIS FAMILY'S BEEN MURDERED— HIS WHOLE WORLD IS SHATTERED.
NOT THAT THIS IS THE TIME TO BE WORRIED ABOUT SOME KID.
OH, SHE WENT TO SEE KAZUYA...

THUNK
TO HELL WITH EVERYONE ELSE.
DAMN GOV-ERNMENT'S ABANDONED US...
GLUG GLUG GLUG
I'M GONNA GO CHECK ON HIM TOO.
CREAK
CREAK
KAZUYA...


KAZUYA, I'M COMING IN.
KAZUYA!

K-...
KAZU...
YA...

SHIMA...
KAZUYA...
WHY...
IT WAS SUICIDE.
AS YOU CAN SEE, HE'S DEADER THAN A DOORNAIL.

LITTLE KIDS ARE JUST SO FRAGILE.
OF COURSE HIS WHOLE FAMILY'S DEAD, CAN'T REALLY BLAME HIM.
MICHIKO
...

REMEMBER THE KING'S ORDER?
NO, I DIDN'T KILL HIM, JEEZ!
D-DID YOU... KILL KAZ—
"ONE PERSON MUST COMMIT SUICIDE EVERY EIGHT HOURS."
IF I HADN'T CONVINCED HIM TO KILL HIMSELF IT WOULD'VE BEEN POINTLESS.
CO... CONVINCED?

YUP.
I TOLD HIM HIS MOMMY AND DADDY WERE WAITING FOR HIM UP IN HEAVEN...
...AND HE WAS ALL TOO EAGER TO STRING HIMSELF UP.
YOU... YOU...
...TALKED KAZUYA... INTO... HANGING HIMSELF?!
HE WAS SO HAPPY WHEN I TIED THE NOOSE FOR HIM.
VERY GRATEFUL.

IT'S LIKE KAZUYA AND I FINALLY MADE FRIENDS RIGHT AT THE END.
MICHIKO, YOU—!
YOU DAMN...
STOMP
WHY WOULD YOU MAKE KAZUYA DO THAT?!
WHY?
IF SOMEONE HAS TO CROAK EITHER WAY, BETTER THAT IT'S SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO DIE.
BECAUSE IF SOMEONE DIDN'T COMMIT SUICIDE BEFORE MIDNIGHT, A RANDOM PERSON WOULD BE PUNISHED.

SO YOU TALKED KAZUYA INTO WANTING TO KILL HIMSELF?!
WELL, YEAH.
SO WHAT?

ALL I DID WAS TELL HIM ABOUT HEAVEN.

NOT ABOUT THE HARSH REALITY, BUT A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE STORY.
KAZUYA CHOSE DEATH OF HIS OWN WILL.
I THINK HE WAS MUCH HAPPIER FOR IT, TOO.

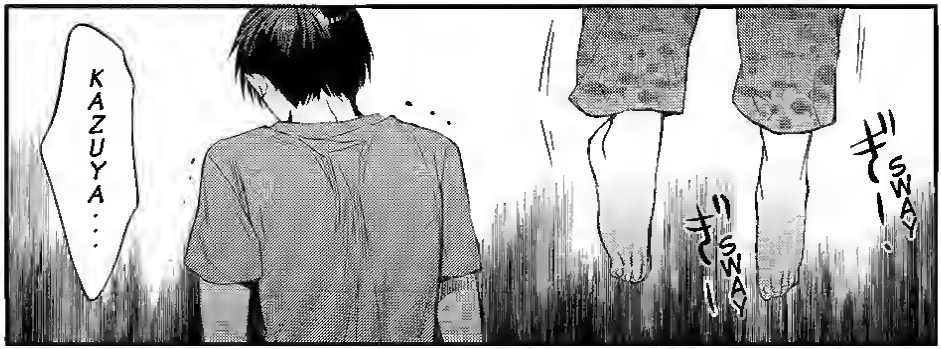
GET REAL!
YOU ONLY TALKED HIM INTO IT BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T WANT TO DIE!
RIGHT AS THE ROPE WENT OVER HIS HEAD...
...HE SMILED.
HAPPY? HAPPY?!
YEAH.
BITCH!
YOU..
GROWL
AND I HADN'T SEEN HIM SMILE ONCE SINCE HISAKO-SAN DIED.

DID YOU NOT SEE HOW KOUJI-SAN AND SANAE-SAN DIED EARLIER?
NOBODY ON EARTH WOULD WANT TO DIE LIKE THEM!
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
GRR
LOOK, KAZUNARI ...
AH HA HA HA HA!
NO SHIT, SHER-LOCK! BRILLIANT DEDUC-TION!

INCLUD-
ING
YOU.
MAYBE I
DID GET
KAZUYA
TO KILL
HIMSELF TO
SAVE MY
OWN SKIN.
BUT AT THE
SAME TIME,
I SAVED
EVERYONE
ELSE TOO,
DIDN'T I?
YOU THINK
YOU
SAVED
ME?! I
WOULD
NEVER
WANT
THAT!
SACRIFIC-
ING POOR
KAZUYA
JUST TO
SAVE MY
OWN-
THEN WHAT
ABOUT
NATSUKO?
YOU STILL
BELIEVE
SHE'S
ALIVE OUT
THERE,
RIGHT?
WOULD
YOU HAVE
WANTED HER
TO TAKE THE
HIT?

I...
I MEAN, I COULD NEVER DO SOME-THING...
...LIKE WHAT YOU DID...
HRMMM...
FLIP
REEEEE-ALLY?
MEH, WHAT-EVER.
NO! NO, THAT IS NOT TRUE AT ALL!
YOU'RE RELIEVED, AREN'T YOU?

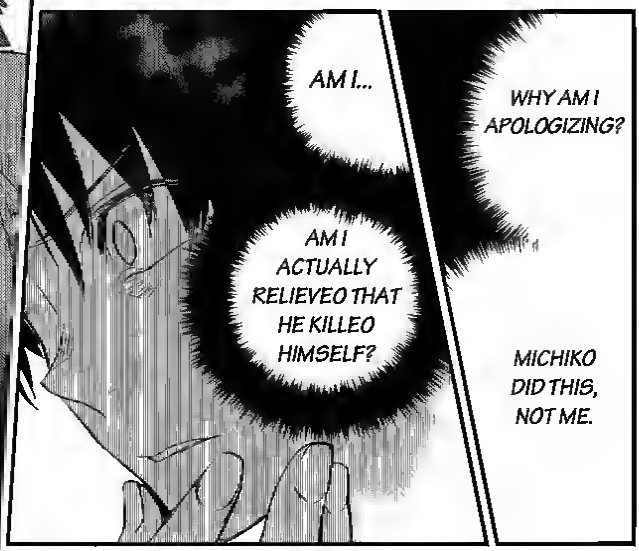
I'LL GO TELL EVERYONE IN THE COMMON ROOM THAT KAZUYA KILLED HIMSELF.
WE'RE GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES HERE.
DO EV-ERYONE A FAVOR AND LET THE COPS KNOW, 'KAY?
BYE BYE, KAZUYA.
BE HAPPY UP IN HEAVEN WITH YOUR MOM AND DAD.
OH, AND TELL HISAKO-SAN I'M SORRY...
...FOR GETTING HER KILLED DURING THE LOTTERY 'CUZ I WAS MAD AT HER.
KAZUMMMM
KAZUMMMM


KAZUYA...
SWAY
SWAY

THAT I WON'T HAVE TO DIE NOW?
THAT NATSUKO WASN'T KILLED INSTEAD?

I'M SORRY..

BLINK


AM I...
AM I ACTUALLY RELIEVED THAT HE KILLED HIMSELF?
WHY AM I APOLOGIZING?
MICHIKO DID THIS, NOT ME.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO...
BUT I KNOW SACRIFICING SOMEONE ELSE LIKE MICHIKO DID, JUST TO SAVE MY OWN LIFE, IS WRONG!
DAMNIT, NO! NEVER!
WRONG. SHE'S WRONG.